

# Connections

A Publication for Employees of the Missouri Department of Transportation

August 22, 2013

## New Assistant Chief Engineer

Central Office

Districts

Northwest

Northeast

Kansas City

Central

St. Louis

Southwest

Southeast



New Assistant Chief Engineer Kathy Harvey, a familiar face at MoDOT, brings 22 years of experience to her new role.

A familiar face will be filling the role of MoDOT assistant chief engineer. With Kathy Harvey's appointment to the job, the executive management team is now complete and ready to face whatever challenges the future holds.

Previously MoDOT's state design engineer, Kathy has been with MoDOT for 22 years. During that time, Harvey accepted various roles of increasing responsibility, including serving as a liaison and tech support engineer where she oversaw the historic preservation and environmental studies of the design division.

In 2005, Harvey became the state design engineer. In this role, she administered plans for bid lettings, environmental and historic preservation efforts, updates for the Engineering Policy Guide, and oversaw various policy and regulatory issues. She is known as an advocate for innovative contracting methods and practical design.

"Kathy helped the department achieve the level of national recognition we enjoy today," said MoDOT Chief Engineer Ed Hassinger. "Her proven leadership ability and experience are the perfect match for the assistant chief engineer position."

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## Changes in MoDOT's Educational Assistance Program

by Holly Dentner

MoDOT supports the educational development of its employees through a variety of opportunities, because we understand that a lifetime of continuous learning not only helps individual employees, but enhances the department as a whole. In fact, educational development falls under one of MoDOT's core values to "Be Better."

The department recently reinstated the Educational Assistance Program for employees wanting to earn their associate's, bachelor's or master's degrees. This program reimburses tuition costs for employees taking courses through accredited colleges and universities.

"We designed the Educational Assistance Program to help develop employees and prepare them for specific career paths," said Micki Knudsen, MoDOT's human resources director. "This is an investment MoDOT makes in our employees so they can advance their careers at the department."

With the reinstatement of the program comes a few changes. First, the base reimbursement is now 75 percent of the actual course cost, with the reimbursement per credit hour rate capped at the University of Missouri – Columbia tuition rates.

So if an employee is enrolled in a course at MU, they could potentially receive 75 percent reimbursement for the cost of that course. If the employee chooses to attend another college or university, the reimbursement rate is still 75 percent, as long as it does not exceed the cost per credit hour at MU.

Another change for the program means that employees must receive a passing grade of A, B, or C (or pass a pass/fail course) to receive reimbursement. Grades of D or F would not be eligible. This differs from the previous program, which reimbursed full or partial tuition based on what grade was earned.

"Studies show that students who invest in their own education work harder because they've made an investment in themselves," said



Knudsen. “We hold our employees to that same standard of success. This change will maintain that, but make the reimbursement process simpler.”

Under the revised program, reimbursement is allowed for a maximum of 12 credit hours per calendar year. Employees can still pursue multiple degrees, but MoDOT will not reimburse for multiple degrees of the same level.

The other major program change falls under the length of employment required before employees are eligible for educational assistance. For undergraduate degrees, the program has not changed – employees must be employed at MoDOT for at least six months. Master’s degree candidates must currently be employed in a professional position (salary grade 11 or higher) with at least four years of service to the department, or begin employment in a position with a salary grade of 15 or higher and complete at least six months of service.

There are administrative changes to the program that should make the process easier for employees, including form submittals, documentation, checklists and educational resources to guide employees through the process. Details can be found on the [Educational Assistance SharePoint site](#) (*link works for active employees only*).

## Missouri Has a New State Map!

by Matt Hiebert

With a centennial-themed cover, the new state highway map features 252 miles of additional highway, insets of the Chicago to Kansas City Expressway, an updated Katy Trail inset and the newly signed U.S. Bike Route 76 Transamerica Trail.

MoDOT has led the way among state agencies in using mapping software and data to make the map as accurate as technologically possible.



“We pioneered the use of ArcMap desktop software with this edition,” said Myrna Tucker, transportation management systems administrator. “This approach had never been taken to this level. MoDOT was the first in the nation to use this software in-house.”

The new map also shows historic locations, hospitals, airports, Amtrak stations, colleges and universities.

Other helpful bits of information include easy-to-locate emergency telephone numbers, and contact information for MoDOT district offices.

The completion of the centennial map was a team effort that involved various MoDOT departments and other state agencies.

“Tourism, Natural Resources and Conservation supplied us with information for several features of the map,” Tucker said.

Maps will be available in all districts by Sept. 2.

## Team Talk

by Roberta Broeker

Hello, Team MoDOT! I’ve had the privilege of meeting folks from DOTs across the country, and I’m proud to say MoDOT is considered a national leader. What do others think we do so well? Is it practical design? Is it consistently delivering projects on-time and on-budget? Is it our low administrative costs or the way we clear our roads during a snow fight? Those are all things to be proud of, but the thing others envy about MoDOT is our innovation.

Every day, MoDOT employees find ways to get their work done better, faster, cheaper and safer. Maybe it’s our show-me spirit that makes us so eager to show others what can be done if we try something new. But I think it’s also because we live our value of being bold.

Right now, our Safe & Sound Bridge Improvement Program and the Highway 5 Shared Four-Lane project are in the national transportation spotlight. That wouldn’t have happened if we hadn’t been bold enough to try something new. And it’s not just big projects where employee creativity shines. During the past twelve months, MoDOT employees submitted more than 100 innovations to the Solutions at Work program with a record 26 approved as statewide best practices. Last spring we had dozens of submissions to the Tool and Equipment Challenge and the new Promo Challenge. One of those went on to win a Governor’s Safety Award. Whether it’s special tools created from scrap materials or novel project designs to cut costs and improve safety, MoDOT employees use innovation to produce exceptional results.



Regardless of where we work or what we do, we all need to be open to new ways to get our work done. “That’s the way we’ve always done it,” is *not* a good answer. I dare you to try something new. Even if it doesn’t work out quite the way you intended, trying something new makes you smarter ... and eliminates one “not quite right” solution.



There's another reason we live for innovation. And it goes back to being Team MoDOT. Trying new things and doing hard things can be scary. What if we fail? At Team MoDOT, we shake it off and move on. And we can do that because we know our teammates have our back.

At one time or another, we've all had to step up and try something new, or make a hard choice, or deliver an unpopular decision. But when I've had to do that, the thing that made it a little easier, the thing that **MAKES ME BRAVER THAN I AM**, is that I know my team has my back. They'll be there if I need them. Because on Team MoDOT, that's the way we roll. So don't be afraid. Be bold!

Thanks for being part of Team MoDOT!

## Fun at the Fair!



Left - Barrel Bob greets visitors during MoDOT Day at the fair. On the last night of the fair, pranksters “escorted” Bob to a nearby fried green tomatoes vendor. Since Bob is known for his love of fair food, we suspect he was a willing participant.

Above - Loyde Anderson, a senior facility operations crew worker from the Northwest District, shares Amtrak information with a young fairgoer. The transportation expo center also featured information on highway safety, motor carrier services and Adopt-A-Highway.



Right - Senior Maintenance Worker Joe Gibson helps some kids submit their scavenger hunt answers in the drawing. The scavenger hunt sent fairgoers all over the Highway Gardens, hunting for answers to ten questions about MoDOT and roadway safety.

Above - Senior Environmental Specialist Melissa Scheperle created a bean bag toss game that helps kids understand why clean water is important.

## Fast Facts - Safety Belts

by DeAnne Rickabaugh

According to the latest survey, 79 percent of Missourians buckle



up.

According to 2013 year-to-date crash reports, 64 percent of those killed in crashes chose to remain unbuckled.

What a statement! When the unbuckled 21 percent of automobile travelers make up 64 percent of the dead, the value of safety belts is obvious. Encourage everyone you know to buckle up and use approved child-passenger restraints.

Check out all the stats on buckling up on the website - [savemolives.com](http://savemolives.com) and Arrive Alive!

## What's Happening



**I-70 Blanchette Bridge Opens Two Months Ahead of Schedule**

The westbound Interstate 70 Blanchette Missouri River Bridge in St. Louis opened to traffic on on August 16, two months ahead of schedule.

See St. Louis District page for the full story - [STL District](#).



**MoDOT Employee Named State Employee of the Month**

Rusty James, incident management coordinator for MoDOT and KC Scout, is the August 2013 Missouri State Employee of the Month.

Chosen from more than 50,000 employees, James is recognized for his successful leadership of the Scout Incident Management Program.

See KC District page for the full story - [KC District](#).



**Tracker Noted as a Best Practice by FHWA**

Director Nichols kicked off the quarterly Tracker meeting last week by saying our Tracker document has been acknowledged as a noteworthy practice by the Federal Highway Administration.

FHWA acknowledges states and local agencies who are successfully implementing innovative approaches to transportation performance planning, implementation and evaluation. They included MoDOT's Tracker because it helps achieve accountability and transparency, aligns performance measures and strategic goals, and is an outcome-based performance management tool.

Read the FHWA's Tracker review and see other noteworthy innovative approaches to transportation - <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tpm/resources/noteworthy.cfm>

**Highway Commissioner Receives Award**

Former Missouri Highways and Transportation Chair Rudy Farber was recently selected as one of the 2013 recipients of The Missourian Award. Farber accepted the award during a banquet Aug. 10 in Jefferson City.





Commissioner Farber speaking at one of the many MoDOT events he attended while serving on the Commission.

To be selected, individuals must have been born in the State of Missouri or became famous in Missouri. Nominees must have made an outstanding contribution to their community, state or nation in one of the following fields: civics, business, arts or politics. Proceeds from the annual event benefit the American Heart Association.

Farber is Chairman of the Board of Community Bank & Trust, headquartered in Neosho, Mo. In April 2007, Governor Blunt appointed Farber to the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission. He served on the commission until June 2013, and was chairperson during part of his term.



### EAC Minutes

Minutes from the Employee Advisory Council's July meeting are posted on the EAC website - [http://wwwi/intranet/eac/documents/July\\_2013.pdf](http://wwwi/intranet/eac/documents/July_2013.pdf).

If you have any questions or comments, please contact the EAC at [eac@modot.mo.gov](mailto:eac@modot.mo.gov) (links works for active employees only).



### Chat With the Chief

Remember to check out Chief Engineer Ed Hassinger's blog post and see Ed's comments and video on our new Assistant Chief Engineer Kathy Harvey - [Chat with the Chief](#).



### How Are We Doing?

MPERS staff strive to serve you to the best of their ability by providing easy to understand benefit information and quality customer service.

To know if they are meeting your needs and expectations, they are requesting employees take a moment to provide feedback and suggestions through a short, online survey - <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6T67J3F>

Questions?

Pam Henry, Assistant Executive Director, MoDOT & Patrol Employees' Retirement System  
[Pam.Henry@modot.mo.gov](mailto:Pam.Henry@modot.mo.gov) - 573-298-6019



### Win a MoDOT Centennial T-shirt

Congratulations to Kate Huhman of the St. Louis District and Bill Noyes of the Northeast District - Macon Regional Office. They knew that "Smoother, Safer, Sooner" was the name of MoDOT's post- Amendment 3 program. Overlays, diamond grinding, rumble stripes, reflectivity and projects, projects, projects appeared all over Missouri as MoDOT hit the ground running. These efforts helped boost customer satisfaction to the current 85 percent measure we enjoy today.

**Let's stay in the current decade for this quiz.**

Barrel Bob is MoDOT's work zone safety spokesbarrel. He spreads the word about driving safely near workers, whether in a traditional or moving work zone. He has a big fan club on Facebook ([facebook.com/MOBarrelBob](https://www.facebook.com/MOBarrelBob)) where he reveals himself to be MoDOT workers' most ardent cheerleader.

Bob's MoDOT career began in 2010. He was created by Robert Ohl, who shared MoDOT's concern about multiple crashes in a particular work zone. Ohl took surplus material, fashioned our giant orange hero and placed him next to a variable message board that gave specific instructions to drivers approaching the zone. That's all it took. Because drivers noticed Bob, they read the message and were prepared for what was ahead in the zone. No more crashes occurred.

Which project brought forth Barrel Bob's debut?

- U.S. Route 71 / Interstate 49 Conversion
- U.S. 36 Four-laning
- Interstate 44 / Kansas Expressway Diverging Diamond Interchange
- kcICON

Enter online here: [Quiz](#) or fax your answer, name and phone number to (573) 526-4859 by Friday, Sept. 6 for a shot at the next t-shirt give away (*link works for active employees only*).

August Retirements

|                                      |                                      |                             |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Walter D. West - NW - 28 years       | Thomas A. Carnes - CD - 14 years     | Joseph W. O'Hara - SW - 11  |
| Gary J. Burge - KC - 23 years        | Kenneth R. Holtgrewe - CD - 26 years | Deryle G. Potter - SW - 23  |
| Michael A. Podgornik - KC - 29 years | Floyd D. Peppers - CD - 17 years     | Deborah K. Carter - SE - 25 |
| Terry L. Stowell - KC - 34 years     | Richard E. Creek - SL - 5 years      | Dale H. Kinneman - SE - 29  |

In Memorium

|                                                 |                                       |                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Tony Nicholas (active employee)<br>CD – July 25 | Larry Burke<br>SL District – July 20  | Donald Erbe<br>former D3 – July 27  |
| John Jobe<br>former D2 – July 13                | Larry Cutler<br>former D7 – July 21   | Floyd Wise<br>CO – August 7         |
| Randall Ashley<br>KC District – July 17         | Charles Petty<br>former D10 – July 22 | Robert Mann<br>former D2 – August 8 |
| Joseph Bachman<br>former D3 – July 18           | Dean Clopp<br>former D5 – July 22     |                                     |

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Customer Relations - MoDOT  
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## Youth Transportation Conference

by Jim Dickson

Nearly 30 high school students from across the state recently enjoyed a six-day journey of discovery into the field of transportation. The annual Youth Transportation Conference, held July 21-26 in Jefferson City, was coordinated by the Equal Opportunity and Diversity Division to expose students to numerous career opportunities in the fields of transportation and civil engineering. The conference is offered free to students entering 9th-12th grade with a special emphasis of providing opportunities to students who may otherwise not have access to similar programs.

The conference was packed with fun and exciting academic, career development and social activities. Hands-on activities focused on applying math, science, and computer concepts to transportation engineering problems. Students also learned how to identify and evaluate the social and environmental impacts for developing new transportation systems. A student favorite was the model bridge building competition with an actual load test determining the winner.



MoDOT employees Anousone Arounpradith (left), Mike Sidebottom (center) and Sharon Golden (right) work with students to complete a team activity called Give Respect, Get Respect during the Youth Transportation Conference. The exercise was part of an anti-bias program designed for young people to raise awareness around diversity issues and encourage respect and acceptance among peers. The students, along with 10 MoDOT employees, went through a series of activities to better understand and deal with diversity in the classroom, community and workplace.

## August Health & Safety Tips *Working with Trailers*

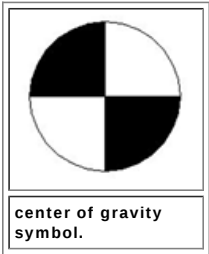
Trailers used to deliver equipment and materials can create safety issues if not used properly. A mishap with a trailer can be expensive, because it affects not only the trailer and its cargo, but most likely the tow vehicle and other vehicles and personnel in the area. How to Stay Safe:

### Pre-Departure Safety Checklist

- Before driving, make sure your vehicle maintenance and trailer maintenance are current. This is very important because towing puts additional stress on the tow vehicle.
- Complete pre-trip inspections on the power unit and trailer to ensure safe operations.
- Check and correct tire pressure on the tow vehicle and trailer.
- Ensure the tires on the unit are in good condition including the tire tread.



- Make sure the wheel lug nuts/bolts on the tow vehicle and trailer are tightened to the correct torque.
- Be sure the hitch, coupler, draw bar, and other equipment that connect the trailer and the tow vehicle are properly secured and adjusted.
- Connect the trailer safety chains securely to the trailer hitch or tow vehicle by crossing them underneath the coupler. The safety chains should be long enough to allow for tight turns. Anything longer may weaken the safety feature of the chains if other connections fail. Also make sure the chains cannot wiggle or bounce free and don't let them drag on the ground.
- Check that the wiring is properly connected – not touching the road, but loose enough to make turns without disconnecting or damaging the wires.
- Make sure all running lights, brake lights, turn signals, and hazard lights are working.
- Verify that the brakes on the tow vehicle and trailer are operating correctly.
- Check that all items are securely fastened on and in the trailer.
- Be sure the trailer jack, tongue support, and any attached stabilizers are raised and locked in place.
- Check the trailer deck to ensure it is in good condition and will hold the load placed upon it.
- Inspect the tie-down points to ensure that they will handle the stress that will be placed upon them.
- Check load distribution to make sure the tow vehicle and trailer are properly balanced front to back and side to side.
- Trailers and equipment should be marked with the center of gravity symbol which helps with the positioning of equipment upon the trailer unit.
- Cargo must be contained within the vehicle.
- Only DOT, grade 7/70, three-eighths inch or better tie downs shall be used to secure heavy equipment. Any unmarked chain will be considered grade 30.
- Check side and rear view mirrors to make sure you have good visibility.
- Measure the height of your cargo to ensure you do not exceed 13 foot 6 inch maximum height requirement.



**Safety Tips for Driving with a Trailer**

It is the responsibility of the operator/driver to ensure their cargo is loaded and secured to prevent the cargo from leaking, spilling, blowing, or falling from the vehicle, even if the cargo was loaded by someone other than the operator/driver.

- Be a defensive driver, scanning the road ahead and the area beside you for potential hazards or dangerous situations.
- Drive at moderate speeds. This will place less strain on your tow vehicle and trailer. Trailer instability (sway) is more likely to occur as speed increases.
- Check your tie downs for tightness after the first 50 miles and every 150 miles or 3 hours of your trip.
- Check your mirrors frequently to ensure your cargo is still in place.
- Avoid sudden stops and starts that can cause skidding, sliding, or jackknifing.
- Avoid sudden steering maneuvers that might create sway or undue side force on the trailer.
- Slow down when traveling over bumpy roads, railroad crossings, and ditches.
- Make wider turns at curves and corners. Because your trailer's wheels are closer to the inside of a turn than the wheels of your tow vehicle, they are more likely to hit or ride up over curbs.
- To control swaying caused by air pressure changes and wind buffeting when larger vehicles pass from either direction, release the accelerator pedal to slow down and keep a firm grip on the steering wheel.
- Increase following distance to allow more time for slowing/stopping.
- Always anticipate the need to slow down. To reduce speed, shift to a lower gear and press the brakes lightly.
- When parked, have wheel chocks available to help prevent the unit from rolling.



Protect yourself, your co-workers and other traveling motorists by following the above check list and safety tips.

**What's Happening at Central Office**



**More on Mentoring**

Two videos on You Tube share good insights to mentoring. If you are currently a mentor or mentee, or considering taking part in MoDOT's mentoring program, take a moment to review these videos:

[Making the Most of Mentoring Conversations](#)

[Mentoring Skills: Goal Setting](#)

Previous newsletters about the mentoring program are also available at: [Mentor Newsletter](#) (link for active employees only).





CPR Training

Location: HRED Training Room B, 601 W. Main, Jefferson City

|          |                  |                  |
|----------|------------------|------------------|
| Sept. 19 |                  | 12 p.m. - 4 p.m. |
| Sept. 24 | 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. | 12 p.m. - 4 p.m. |
| Sept. 24 | 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. | 12 p.m. - 4 p.m. |

Sign up now using this LMS Student Center Sign-On link - [LMS](#)

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## Regional Partners Form New Highway Coalition

A new Route 5 Coalition in Northwest Missouri is on its way to uniting several communities and individuals in their goal of economic development and transportation improvements for the region.

In a meeting with county commissioners, city leaders and a local water board along Route 5 in Putnam, Sullivan, Linn and Chariton counties, Area Engineer Tonya Lohman realized that each group had a project they were working on and many of their needs and goals overlapped. Because several of the projects and plans along the route are somewhat small, each group, working individually, had limited resources and therefore limited exposure.

Many of these community leaders are part of a regional planning council, but Lohman suggested these communities take it one step further. In other areas of the district she has worked closely with different coalitions such as the Highway 36 Alliance and the Highway 13 Coalition. She suggested these individual communities and groups band together to support their individual projects through a regional network. By working together to promote each other's needs and accomplishments through a Route 5 Coalition, these partners can draw attention to the region as a whole and promote investment in the infrastructure to support continued growth. It also allows the needs of the area and coming projects to be evaluated as regional impacts. Economic development monies can be directed towards projects as they are shown to impact the entire region, rather than just one of the smaller, individual communities.

*I'm so proud of the way these groups came together in such a short time. I mentioned coalitions back in my spring meetings with the county commissioners and at the TAC meeting at Green Hills in March. We've already had the first Route 5 Meeting at the end of July - that is great progress!*  
-- Tonya Lohman, area engineer

Commissioners from all four counties, the cities of Unionville, Milan and Marceline, along with interested partners along the route, jumped on the idea and have quickly made progress in forming the Route 5 Coalition. The group has decreed their mission to be: to advocate for infrastructure improvements along the Highway 5 corridor from Chariton County to Putnam County in order to improve safety, enhance efficiency, and promote economic development. Danah Fowler, of Fowler Trucking in Milan and a member of the Green Hills Regional Planning Commission's Transportation Advisory Committee, helped to draft the initial coalition pamphlet and charter.



Area Engineer Tonya Lehman met with Sullivan County leaders during the On The Move mobile tour. These community leaders have been instrumental in forming the Route 5 Coalition to advance regional projects and needs along a four county corridor in Northwest Missouri.

Economic development is important in all areas of the state as it offers many benefits. By the Route 5 Coalition taking a regional approach, it provides a clearer picture of the area's needs when MoDOT and regional planning commissions develop STIP projects for coming years.

Commissioners from all four counties, the cities of Unionville, Milan and Marceline, along with interested partners along the

## Chief Financial Officer Visits NW District

Roberta Broeker, chief financial officer for MoDOT, visited the Northwest District on Thursday, Aug. 15, and had the opportunity to speak with many employees as part of two different meetings. In the morning, Broeker participated in the Northwest District staff meeting and in the afternoon she met with employees from across the district.



Chief Financial Officer Roberta Broeker met with many employees from across the Northwest District during an afternoon open forum held in the Northwest Conference Center.

meeting with a new perspective and a feeling that she was very genuine and truly cared about employees at all levels of the organization.

The meetings were an open forum discussion where she talked a bit about her work history both prior to and at MoDOT, and answered employee questions. Topics included succession planning, funding retirement benefits, the need to develop diversified retirement plans for a new generation of employees, toll roads, a petition initiative for the proposed one-cent sales tax that did not make it through the state legislature last session, and public perception of MoDOT spending.

One employee in the afternoon session said they appreciated getting to know the person behind the position and felt that being able to speak openly and candidly was especially helpful. They came away from the meeting with a new perspective and a feeling that she was very genuine and truly cared about employees at all levels of the organization.

## Surface Smoothness Put To Test

District Construction and Materials staff borrowed a John Deere Gator from the Kansas City district to measure the International Roughness Index of a project on U.S. Hwy 36. The Gator, equipped with a laser, tests exactly how smooth a ride motorists will have after a resurfacing project. Not every project is measured, however. The job special provisions must state that such a test is required. If it is, then this special vehicle is called into service. Many times personnel from the KC District will perform the IRI testing in our district, but due to their work load, some of our staff stepped in and were getting ready to head to the work zone when the photos below were taken.



Intermediate Materials Technician David Campbell gets ready to take the John Deere Gator borrowed from KC District out to test the IRI of a superpave project on U.S. Hwy 36.



If you look closely, you can see the red laser line on the pavement below the Gator. This special piece of equipment determines the actual smoothness of a new resurfacing project.

### For more info

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Customer Relations Manager  
Northwest District  
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[Melissa.Black@modot.mo.gov](mailto:Melissa.Black@modot.mo.gov)

3602 N. Belt Highway  
St. Joseph, MO 64506-1399

### Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at [Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov](mailto:Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov).

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## Product Process Meets With Challenges

Accepting challenges means accepting associated risks, and the NE District embraces both. Recently, a new product called ONYX was put down on two minor roads, and while the full outcome is yet to be determined, the initial response to the product is good. However, there were some challenges along the way.

"The equipment and operators of that equipment were contracted, and they were training someone on the back of the distributor," explained NE District Maintenance and Traffic Engineer Jennifer Hinson. "The traffic control was probably the most challenging issue," she added.



Left - Jennifer Hinson, maintenance and traffic engineer, shows Shari Dye, safety and health manager, how the product is laid and drying. Right - one of the major challenges along Route Y was the number of Amish who were anxious to travel along the road during the project.

Even though regular, proactive communication had been made, both on a personal level and throughout the local media, there were several buggies and cars on the road that impeded progress.

"About 60 percent of the residents on Route Y are Amish, so we had to have flaggers at several intersections to ensure they were communicating with them about the project and help keep them in the dry lane," she said.

Both Routes CC and Y are continually being evaluated to determine the success of the product. Jennifer plans to share a video at the fall meetings about the process.

## Around the District...



Three New Florence maintenance employees were recently presented a Safety Award by Kevin James and Paula Gough



The contractor is pictured setting beams for the new bridge over Elk Creek in Elsberry. MoDOT worked with

for their heroic efforts to extinguish a car fire. They are Dan Schwartz (pictured), Richard Detienne, and Ed Pyatt.

area officials and residents to create two detours to accommodate through traffic as well as tourist traffic. The bridge opened this week after being closed only 20 days.

## Raising the Standards - ADA Improvements Being Made



Gary Tolivar, buildings and ground specialist, asks Holly Thronsdon to move her truck from the front parking row near the district office as he prepares to renovate the area adding handicapped parking, signs and railing.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires facilities to have public accommodations for those with disabilities. So by the end of June 2014, all MoDOT facilities as required by today’s ADA standards in the Northeast District will be compliant. Over the next several months you will see improvements being made to the District Office, Work Life Center, Macon Regional Office and all of the AE/RE offices to bring them up to the correct standards as required by law. Work is already underway on some of these changes.

“The improvements you will see taking place will range from something as simple as installing sign upgrades, to more extensive work including renovating restrooms and re-constructing sidewalks,” said Todd Roth, facilities operations supervisor. The most noticeable changes you will see at the District Office and Macon Regional Office will be sign upgrades to all of the offices, restrooms, conference rooms and break areas.

To date this year, MoDOT has invested \$700,000 in ADA upgrades, including ADA projects on our highway system and within our facilities. As a state, we are 5 percent complete on the improvements needed on highway projects and 20 percent complete on facilities.

For the Northeast District, in total, an estimated \$21,300 will go towards the improvements needed by the end of June.

### For more info

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### Comments & Suggestions

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## CD Employees Rise to Meet Flooding Challenges

Looking back, no one in the Central District can remember a time when Interstate 44 and Routes 50 and 63 were all closed at the same time. But that's exactly what happened on Aug. 7 when floodwaters covered I-44 near Jerome, Route 50 at Mt. Sterling and Route 63 at Vienna and Westphalia.

"Mother Nature dealt us quite a blow with flooding in the southern portion of our district," said Central District Engineer Dave Silvester. "We worked as quickly as we could to repair the flood damage and get travel back to normal."



A swollen and rushing Gasconade River swept an Osage County summer home downstream until it came to rest against the Route 89 bridge. Additional flooding information and photos can be found on the Central District's [Flicker](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.

Central District crews worked tirelessly to reopen I-44 and Route 63 in about 24 hours. I-44 wasn't damaged by floodwaters, but Routes 63 and 50 suffered damage to the pavement edges. Repairs were made on both 63 and 50 before opening the roads to traffic. Route 50 was the last major highway to reopen. Maintenance crews worked long hours to get that route open by noon on Aug. 10.

Three flood-damaged roads required more extensive planning, design and construction work, and those repair projects were bid on Monday. They are:

- Route T near Newburg in Phelps County
- Route H in Waynesville in Pulaski County
- An Interstate 44 outer road, also in Waynesville in Pulaski County.

Work on these three roadways is scheduled to be completed in the next two to three weeks.

"We put in long hours and went the extra mile to make sure we kept motorists safe and informed during the flooding," said Silvester. "Everyone worked together as a team and pitched in to handle this emergency, and it showed," Silvester said.

Silvester said the district's outreach efforts set new records and went far in educating and informing customers during the emergency.

The department's customer service centers handled 17,273 calls from Aug. 4 to Aug. 10, with the average call answered in 13 seconds. The number of calls topped the total received during the major winter storm that hit the state in February.

In the realm of social media, the Central District's Facebook page jumped more than 1,600 page likes over the first three days of the flood, thanks to up-to-the minute road information and behind-the-scenes videos and photos.

The behind-the-scenes photos and videos were particularly a hit with customers on Facebook and Twitter. One video of Route 63 flooding south of Vienna drew more than 35,200 people to the Central District social media sites. A photo of a flooded house near the Route 89 bridge in Osage County attracted more than 16,600 people to Central District social media sites and was also featured on ABC News' website.



# Route Z Project Makes Route to New Battle High School Safer

State and local officials celebrated the completion of the Route Z project in Boone County with a ribbon cutting held Aug. 13 at the new roundabout built at Route Z and St. Charles Road.

In addition to building the roundabout, the Route Z project included replacing the existing Route Z bridge over Interstate 70 and resurfacing and widening Route Z from I-70 to St. Charles Road. The new bridge was completed on July 19, and the roundabout opened to the public on Aug. 6.

The project, paid for through a cost-share agreement between MoDOT and Boone County, will improve safety and accommodate an expected increase in traffic associated with the new Battle High School, which opened Aug. 20.

“We’re happy to have finished this project before school started,” said Central District Engineer David Silvester. “We appreciate the patience of area residents and businesses during the construction of this critical project, which will enhance safety and ease congestion in the area.”

Don Schnieders Excavating Company, Inc. of Jefferson City, Mo., was the contractor on the \$2.1 million project.



Boone County Presiding Commissioner Dan Atwill (with scissors) cuts the ribbon to celebrate the completion of the Route Z improvement project on Aug. 13. The ribbon cutting was held at the new roundabout built as part of the project. Atwill was joined by state and local officials and Columbia Chamber of Commerce ambassadors.

## District Happenings



Fulton Senior Maintenance Worker Gerald Lamons, far right, uses the fatal vision goggles to show visitors to the Missouri State Fair the dangers of impaired driving. Lamons helped staff Central District's day at the fair on Aug. 15.

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## MoDOT Incident Management Coordinator Named State Employee of the Month

by Gina Myles

William “Rusty” James, incident management coordinator for MoDOT and KC Scout, is the August 2013 Missouri State Employee of the Month. Each month the State of Missouri and the Office of Administration recognize the individual contribution of an employee who has provided outstanding service for Missouri citizens. Chosen from more than 50,000 employees, James is recognized for his successful leadership of the KC Scout Incident Management Program.

A former law enforcement officer, James joined the Scout team in 2007 to fill a newly created position. Under his guidance the incident management program has revolutionized the meaning of partnership in the KC regional area.

James introduced the *One Accord Agreement*, a resolution unifying metro area fire, law enforcement, tow and recovery agencies, media, motorist assist and department of transportation personnel with common goals for traffic incident management. Since 2009, the number of partnering agencies has reached nearly 150.

Using the Scout system of cameras and message boards, along with cooperation from these local groups, the Incident Management Program has significantly reduced, by an average of two hours, the amount of time vehicles involved in an accident sit on the roadways.

Scout’s Traffic Incident Management Program has expanded into additional rural and metropolitan areas throughout the state. Cameras, signs and other forms of traveler information systems along the I-70, I-29, I-35, I-44 and I-80 Corridors are modeled after Scout’s program.

In addition to running this program, he also provides traffic incident management training to police, fire, emergency medical services and towing personnel.

“I was surprised to be selected as a candidate and was shocked and honored when I found out I’d received such a prestigious award,” he said. “Of course I can’t take all the credit for the work I do because there are so many people -- my motorist assist team, the Scout staff and all the partners in the Incident Management Program -- that make the program a success.”



Rusty James, incident management coordinator for MoDOT and KC Scout, is the August 2013 Missouri State Employee of the Month.

## Highway Signing Honors Doctor and His Legacy

by Kerri Lewis

A dedication ceremony on Aug. 13 honored the legacy of Arch E.



James Whitsitt, Maintenance Crew Leader at Lee's Summit West, unveiled the sign along Route 169 now dedicated to Dr. Spelman.

Spelman, M.D. naming Route 169 between Route 92 and Route DD in Smithville as the Dr. Arch E. Spelman Memorial Highway.

Family, friends, community members and representatives from MoDOT attended the event as the signs were unveiled. Missouri Highways and Transportation Commissioner Kelley Martin spoke about Spelman's vision and values and how they are just as real today as they were when he began his endeavors.

Spelman, a surgeon who served during WWII and prominent resident of Smithville, was the catalyst behind construction for the first hospital in the Northland between Kansas City and St. Joseph in 1938, now named Saint Luke's North Hospital. He is remembered for his years of dedication to patients and his enduring legacy.

## Manager Takes Customer Service to Heart



Jason Sims recounted his customer service experience before presenting his update at the tracker meeting.

Headed for a statewide Tracker meeting, already late, Traffic Center Manager Jason Sims came across a pedestrian with a flat tire on the side of the road. Help from AAA was an hour away. Motorist Assist help was 25 minutes away, so he pulled up his sleeves and changed her tire himself.

Later that day, a very appreciative husband called Customer Service to thank MoDOT and the MoDOT worker who stopped and offered assistance.

Sometimes "customer service" is also simple kindness.

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## I-70 Blanchette Bridge Opens Two Months Ahead of Schedule

by Linda Wilson Horn



Local and state elected officials and former MHTC Commissioner Grace Nichols (center) cut the ribbon to dedicate the rehabbed westbound I-70 Blanchette Bridge on August 9, 2013.

The westbound Interstate 70 Blanchette Missouri River Bridge was originally built in 1955-1958. It opened on August 16, 1958. Almost exactly 55 years later and \$64 million in rehabilitation, the westbound bridge is open again. The reopening was dedicated on August 9 with a ribbon cutting ceremony attended by local and state officials along with former MHTC Commissioner and former Mayor of St Charles Grace Nichols.

In spring 2012, construction began on the major rehabilitation to ensure the overall bridge structure could handle traffic for another 50 years. Walsh Construction Company began working on repairs to the support columns under the bridge under a live load. On November 4, 2012, the westbound I-70 bridge was closed to traffic for a maximum one year closure.

Both directions of I-70 were placed on the eastbound I-70 bridge, built in 1978. The eastbound bridge temporarily had a barrier wall pinned down the middle of it with three narrow lanes for each direction of I-70. Typically, I-70 traffic has five lanes in each direction on companion bridges.

“This project has had an aggressive schedule from the very beginning and we applaud the contractor, Walsh Construction Company, for all of their hard work,” said Interim St. Louis District Engineer Greg Horn. “We are pleased to deliver another outstanding bridge to the citizens of Missouri not quite 10 months after we closed it.”

During those 10 months, MoDOT and the contractor team fought record low Missouri River levels in December down to just five feet deep, which prevented the use of their barges and forced the construction of a causeway. The team fought near record spring flood levels forcing them out of the water and out from under the bridge entirely. The spring also brought a tornado through the project, and the loss of a barge downstream.

MoDOT St Charles Area Engineer Tom Evers recently received an award from the City of St. Charles for MoDOT’s leadership and communication during the preparation for and the closure of the bridge.

## BRK Innovation Saves New Mississippi River

## Bridge Over \$1 Million

by Andrew Gates

An electrical subcontractor working on the new Mississippi River Bridge was recently awarded for suggestions that saved the project more than \$1 million. BRK Electrical Contractors, a minority owned subcontractor, was also recognized for their innovation for the new bridge this year. The company was recognized by the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials for proposals that saved more than \$1 million on the bridge.

BRK used a process called value engineering to suggest replacing the conduit for utilities on the bridge. It was one of several suggestions the subcontractor provided for the bridge project.



**BRK employees install the cable tray for utilities on the new I-70 Mississippi River Bridge between St. Louis and St. Clair County, Illinois.**

“Instead of a conduit, BRK came up with the idea to install something that looks similar to an aluminum ladder across the bridge to carry utility lines for lighting and the like. The open utility tray uses much less material, but can still carry the utilities needed for the bridge. So, it is cheaper, yet meets the high standards we require on this project,” said Hitt.

The proposals were made as part of MoDOT’s value engineering process – when contractors come up with ideas that meet contract objectives, yet save money. Often, these ideas are proprietary or use specialized knowledge that the contractor has. MoDOT evaluates these ideas and approves them for use if the suggestion saves money and meets department standards.

“This is a great process to make sure MoDOT is able to save taxpayers money while still ensuring we get a quality end product, and use the latest technologies,” said Hitt.

## MoDOT to Commemorate 20 Years of Motorist Assist

by Jack Wang

For 20 years, MoDOT's Motorist Assist operators have come to the rescue of stranded motorists on St. Louis area interstates and highways. While the driver of a broken down vehicle may be relieved to see the familiar yellow and black Motorist Assist uniform, what many may not realize is the important role Motorist Assist plays.

Motorist Assist helps alleviate congestion on interstates, by helping to move incidents off to the right side of the road, allowing commuters to safely and more easily reach their destination. It eases congestion, and helps with air quality by reducing that congestion and saving Missourians time and money that could otherwise be spent sitting idle, stuck in traffic, and wasting gasoline.

Many of those travelers who were helped by Motorist Assist will have the chance to personally thank the operators as MoDOT marks the 20th anniversary of Motorist Assist in the St. Louis district with an open house on Thursday, Aug. 29 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. The event is family friendly.

The open house will be held at the Motorist Assist station located at 669 Salt Mill Road in Chesterfield.

## MoDOT Educates Washington Fair on Safety and New Route 47 Missouri River Bridge

photos by Kara Price

Mayor Sandy Lucy, City of Washington (left) and MoDOT Area Engineer Judy Wagner (right) discuss the new Route 47 Missouri River Bridge with the host (middle) of KLPW 1220 AM Radio. MoDOT and City of



Washington hosted an informational booth at the fair to show fairgoers photos of the new bridge and encourage feedback. The proposed new bridge would provide more safe and efficient travel for many motorists between Franklin and Warren Counties.



Beaufort maintenance workers take a few minutes to pose with Barrel Bob after helping set up the informational booth at the fair. Special thanks to employees from Beaufort and St. Clair maintenance buildings and striping and facilities departments, for bringing Barrel Bob to the fair to remind Franklin County motorists about the importance of work zone safety.



MoDOT Traffic Systems Supervisor Phil Davis partners with Washington's Mercy Hospital to help motorists properly install child passenger seats at the fair. Missouri law requires all children under eight to be in a child safety or booster seat until they are 80 pounds or 4 foot 9 inches tall. Car seat inspection stations are located all over Missouri. Find the one closest to you at [seatcheck.org](http://seatcheck.org).

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**CHECKING THE EMERGENCY SHUT-OFF (Top Right):** Conducting a routine inspection of a propane delivery truck at a distributor in Ozark are Senior Transportation Enforcement Investigators Houston Schooler, left, and Kelly Roth. (Photo/Bob Edwards)

**WINTER PREPAREDNESS STARTS NOW (Top Left):** Loading an early-August delivery of salt into the Springfield salt storage dome is Springfield Maintenance Worker Corey Sparkman. (Photo/Bob Edwards)



**FLOODING AND ITS AFTERMATH (Left):** Bolivar Maintenance Crew Leader Randy Vest unblocks an opening at a low-water bridge on Polk County Route P north of Halfway. (Photo/David Mitchell)

## Flooded Roads? In August? Yes!

by David Mitchell

Unusually heavy rain filled creeks and rivers over three days in early August in southwest and south-central Missouri, pushing floodwaters across Interstate 44 west of Rolla and many other roads.

Roadway patching projects came to a standstill for several days. Work on construction projects also was delayed.

The storms sent MoDOT maintenance crews out to set barricades and signs warning drivers about impassable roads.

The closed roads kept customer service personnel in the Southwest District and statewide busy fielding thousands of phone calls. Long-distance travelers and commuters sought advice on the best routes to use to avoid road closings.

The most troublesome blockages included I-44 at Jerome, Route 50 at Mount Sterling east of Jefferson City and Route 63

near Vienna south of Jefferson City.

I-44 travelers were advised to use alternate routes to make their way across the state.

According to the National Weather Service in Springfield, the southern half of Pulaski County into Wright County received at least 15 inches of rain during this period – more than four times the average for the entire month of August. Other areas received lesser amounts but enough to cause flooding.

Three people died in swift floodwater -- two on Route 17 along Roubidoux Creek in Pulaski County and one on Route 90 along Brush Creek in McDonald County. All three were in their cars when swept away by the rushing water.

Fast-rising water from Turkey Creek in Hollister on Thursday, Aug. 8, closed a section of Route BB and Business 65 and damaged homes in low-lying areas, though no one was hurt and water receded in two or three hours.

"We were lucky," said Branson Maintenance Supervisor Jim Jewsbury, whose area includes Hollister.

Also on Thursday, parts of McDonald County received nine inches of rain in about three hours. Eight roads eventually had to be closed.

While flooding is not uncommon in McDonald County's rugged terrain, water rose quickly over many roads at the same time.

"Most of the rain came to the east of us," Anderson Maintenance Supervisor Tim Bundgard said. "If it had gone more north, it would have been a lot worse."

Flooding closed a number of roads for various lengths of time in several other counties in the district.

With I-44 closed, travelers between Joplin and St. Louis were advised to use Route 360 and Route 60 around Springfield and east to Cabool and Route 63 between Cabool and Rolla. Another alternative offered to people entering Missouri from Oklahoma was I-49 between Joplin and Kansas City and I-70 between Kansas City and St. Louis.

Some eastbound I-44 drivers who got close to Jerome were diverted south on Route 17 to Route 32 at Success to Route 63 at Licking and back north to I-44 at Rolla.

Calls for help to MoDOT Customer Service rose as quickly as the floodwaters and continued in higher-than-normal numbers 'round the clock. Extra personnel were assigned in every call center in the state to answer phones and keep the Traveler Information Map updated.

The heavy rain delayed ongoing construction and maintenance work in the district. For example, the Diverging Diamond Interchange conversion at Kansas Expressway (Route 13) and Route 60 in Springfield was delayed two weekends in a row because of the wet weather.

"Weather is important for about everything we do," District Construction and Materials Engineer Steve Campbell said. "Any asphalt, striping, cleanup work – (rain) just puts the brakes on."

Contractors are working hard to make up for the lost time, Campbell said.

Persistent rain this summer slowed maintenance work like patching, bridge sealing and striping, District Maintenance Engineer Michael Middleton said, but crews have rescheduled and continue to make progress toward meeting the district's goals.

## SW District's 6th Diverging Diamond Interchange Opens in Springfield

by David Mitchell

The newest Diverging Diamond Interchange in the Southwest District is open to traffic. It is on Kansas Expressway (Route 13) at James River Freeway (Route 60) in southwest Springfield.

This is the region's sixth Diverging Diamond Interchange.

A rainy early August delayed the conversion for two weeks, but last weekend's dry weather enabled contractor crews to do the final striping, signal and sign work needed.

Kansas Expressway was closed at 8 p.m. Friday, Aug. 16. It was opened to traffic in its new configuration by about 11 p.m. Saturday.

Monday was the first business day for drivers using the converted interchange. No major problems surfaced.

Diverging Diamond Interchanges, which shift traffic to the left side of the road and eliminate backups for drivers turning left onto the freeway, are becoming commonplace



in the Ozarks. The first such interchange in the United States was unveiled in 2009 at Route 13 and I-44 in north Springfield. Since then, three more were built in Springfield, one in Branson and one earlier this year in Joplin.

Another Diverging Diamond Interchange is scheduled to come online at Battlefield Road and Route 65 in Springfield after the interchange is rebuilt in 2015.

The \$2.7 million project (for construction and design) at Kansas Expressway and James River Freeway was a partnership between MoDOT and the City of Springfield.



**MAKING THE SWITCH**  
Senior Construction Inspector Jason Evenden, center, meets with contractor workers. (Top)

Senior Traffic Studies Specialist Brian Doubrava monitors a signal controller. (Middle)

Kansas Expressway traffic moves through the new Diverging Diamond Interchange. (Bottom)

(Photos/David Mitchell)

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## Donations for Christmas Angels 2013

From tiki masks to nutcrackers, former Project Manager Tim Richmond’s office was known for its collection of eclectic décor. As he was packing up his belongings, Tim decided to turn it into a fundraising opportunity for the Christmas Angels Program. Each year, the program helps grant Christmas wishes to underprivileged families in Southeast Missouri.

Tim donated the following items for an auction, with the proceeds going to the Christmas Angels Program:

- Tim Richmond Painting: Tim painted this oil-based painting for a class project when he was in college (early 1980's).
- Nightstand: This sat in the corner of Tim's office to gather plans and serve as an overflow from his table.
- Missouri Seal: Tim bought this several years ago from the Missouri Vocational Enterprises.
- ANSI Z89.1 Hard Hat: This hard hat has the appearance of being shot at. Tim noted he never had a chance to wear it to the field.
- Tiki Mask: The mask was referred to as "Tiki Tim" or "Fred" and modeled a hard hat when it hung on Tim's wall.
- Nutcracker: This wonderful piece plays music and looks great on a shelf. Tim referred to it as a do everything and anything "One Man Band."



Each item will be sold to its highest bidder. Please email bids to Jeff Wachter at [jeffery.wachter@modot.mo.gov](mailto:jeffery.wachter@modot.mo.gov), including the item and amount of the bid. Updated bid totals will be sent out via email Aug. 28. Bidding will close at 3 p.m. Aug. 30.

## SE District Auction Raises Money for Projects

On the heels of the June auction in Willow Springs, the Southeast District held a second auction in Sikeston in early August.



“The recent auction generated over \$114,000,” said General Services Manager Jacky Traw. “Together, the two auctions raised over \$200,000.”

Traw explained funds raised through the auction will be put back into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program’s budget for use on roadway improvements.

“With the current lack of transportation funding, MoDOT is trying to make the best use of taxpayers’ dollars and generate funds by marketing existing property and equipment no longer needed to build, improve or maintain Missouri’s highway system,” he added.

Prices were recently reduced for several SE District properties for sale through the Realty to Roads Program. Click on the image above to view details about Route PP in Butler County or additional properties included in the program.

Individuals interested in purchasing property through the Realty to Roads Program, can view Southeast Missouri parcels at [www.modot.org/southeast/RealtytoRoads.htm](http://www.modot.org/southeast/RealtytoRoads.htm). In addition, items are available through GovDeals at [www.modot.org/business/contractor\\_resources/MoDOTSurplusAuctions](http://www.modot.org/business/contractor_resources/MoDOTSurplusAuctions).

### MHTC Visits Farmington

The August meeting of the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission was held at the Farmington Civic Center.

Public presentations included:

- New Bourbon Regional Port and Southeast Metropolitan Planning Organization - Chauncy Buchheit, Executive Director of the Southeast Regional Planning Commission
- Southeast Missouri Transportation Service, Inc. - Denny Ward, Assistant Executive Director
- Bridge Replacement on Highway 41 - Mr. Russell Lang, Boonville area farmer, and Mr. Tim Weekly, Cooper County Resident.



District Engineer Mark Shelton updated the Commission on recent SE District projects.

The Commission is a six-member bipartisan board that governs MoDOT. Currently, there is one vacancy within the Commission. Members are appointed for a six-year term by the governor and are confirmed by the Missouri Senate.

For information on upcoming meetings,

please visit [www.modot.org/about/commission](http://www.modot.org/about/commission).

### Update: Route M Overpass



The MHTC awarded a contract for an emergency bridge replacement on Route M in Scott County in early July. The bridge collapsed following a train collision of Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroads on May 25. The deck pour was completed on Aug. 18. MoDOT's contractor has been diligently working to complete the project and open the bridge to traffic by Aug. 31.

### Customer Call: Thank You!

Misty Novotny called to say she was very impressed after she contacted MoDOT to mark the right of way for a building on Route DD in Ste. Genevieve County. Within a day, the area was marked. She said Shawn Lalumondiere left his card and told her if there is anything further to get in contact with his building. In addition, there was another MoDOT employee who was just as nice, but she said she neglected to get his name. Mrs. Novotny wanted to thank MoDOT for hiring such nice people and said this reflects well on MoDOT!

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